
BOARD OF SELECTMEN

MEETING MINUTES

4/17/10

The Board of Selectmen met in the Town Hall, Joseph F. Bilotta Meeting Room as scheduled with Thomas Alonzo, Paula Bertram, Steven M. deBettencourt, Dave Matthews and Town Manager Kerry Speidel present, Thomas Mason absent. Meeting opened at 10:08 A.M. with the Pledge of Allegiance

CURRENT BUSINESS

1. Minutes - None

Warrants - #57A, 4/16/10 - \$617.41 and #58 10, 4/14/10 - \$650,968.02 reviewed and signed.

2. Special Annual Town Meeting Articles – Kerry presented the attached revised budgets. Paula and Steve voiced their concerns that they haven't been apprised of what potential cuts are being made to the budget and the lack of communication. Chair noted that there is a way to have the information and that is through the town manager. Kerry noted that initially the recommended budget for the school showed a decrease of 1% due to continued decreasing enrollment. Noted that a good part of the increase to the town departments was just to bring them back to where they were, before the furlough's. Also, noted grant funds that were utilized for portions of the fire department budget and its currently unknown if that funding will be available again. included reduction in hours in the treasurer/collector department from 1 full time position down to 3 days per week, will not impact unemployment. Second cut that was originally presented was in the planning office, two employees work a combined total of 48 hours, makes more sense to have one full time person versus two part time. Will lose one person and have one full time employee resulting in a loss of 8 hours per week. The assistant town clerk's position is open as the person retired from that position last month. Would like to move Lynne (Planning Board) to another position. Board would rather see combining two part time positions into full time where we can address these issues. Kerry has spoken with Elaine and Lynne regarding these reductions. All of those changes accounted for the adjustment for level funding.

Reveiwed the attached FY2011 Budget Adjustments, to include remainder of option #1. Kerry first looked at cutting two days per week from the administration and library, but came to the realization that this would be too disruptive and deciding which personnel would remain working the five days per week as they serve all the town departments, such as accounting, was not going to work. Reviewed the proposal which would only account for two days per week for cleaning. Currently the individual also sets up for meetings at the buildings that he is responsible for. Sent an email out to all department heads and requested that they advise her of any other issues and all department heads are all aware of what's going on. Largest concern is with the abiltiy to keep the library clean, and believe that we can keep up with contract labor, but will lose the odd job capability. This would eliminate one full time position including the health insurance benefit. Kerry has put that union on notice that the town is looking at contracting out cleaning services and the union stated that they understood and wouldn't be challenging. The other position is Mary's position (combined Human Resource and Purchasing) and Kerry has not had the opportunity to talk with her. Her position is split between accounting and administration. Initially, she was doing the sewer invoicing, she is our human resources and does benefits related bills. Next week we will be setting up the VPN access and would like departments to be able to enter their own purchase orders and payroll. This would limit what Mary has been currently doing as far as the accounting portion, purchase orders. Kerry has also spoken with Donna to discuss the potential of her taking on more of the human resources piece and she could be able to handle, only concern is with certain times of the year and the time requirements for reporting, i.e. state reporting, 941's etc.

Discussed the option of utilizing the school human resource individual and this discussion is on the radar and is continuing with the Superintendent. This position on the town side is a non-union position, both of these employees have been here a significant amount of time. The safe assumption is that she will be on unemployment benefits until she were to retire. Potential cost to the town in unemployment would be \$36,124.

Tom noted that the \$14,569,077 should actually be the bottom number. The \$14,300,867 savings of 91K will be put over to the school side and our intention to put their unemployment costs of \$177,128 within the school line items. Originally had a 330K budget deficit with the schools budget and then adding in the unemployement expense to get to the \$14,569,077.

The language with regards to the health insurance stipend within the school contracts should be discussed perhaps in executive session between this board and the school committee. Currently the school is looking at 10 plus cuts in positions and we are looking at 2 plus, which percentage wise is close to the same. Consensus is that these decisions are painfull on both sides, town and school. Discussed the legal line item and it's known that we have to increase, the question is do we put a little more risk assessment knowing that we're currently in litigation. Kerry has pushed the budget up for 2011, raising it from 95K to 150K which is a reduction of 25K from her initial appropriation of 175K. Paula's concern is that we are really going to be able to cut this budget knowing the litigations that we're currently dealing with. Discussed whether there are other areas that we can outsource, noted plowing, payroll. Paula noted her concern with the building department and with the number of projects that are out there, she has a concern that the building inspector

can meet the inspection deadlines that by law he's required to within a specified time. Potential to fund this budget similar to what is being done with the electric and wiring inspector where a portion of the fees are applied to their wages.

Salary reserve account has 30K to pay out and contract settlements and sick leave buybacks. Dependent upon what happens with Personnel Committee and their work, there are a couple of people who have gone without a salary increase, one being the building inspector and the other is the sewer business manager, whose increase would come out of the sewer enterprise fund. So if necessary we could use this line item to move salary monies around to cover issues such as the assistant for the building inspector. Discussed taking the money out of stabilization fund to fund the unemployment costs and how can we ensure that the schools portion is under the schools so that they can't spend this money. Kerry's recommendation was to have a line item under the schools budget specifically for unemployment.

Kerry also discussed the health insurance increase of 10.9%, our increase recently has been fairly low and she has had three meetings with the PEC. Went out to bid for health insurance and only received one bid. MIIA is offering a different version which has \$200 to \$400 co-pays for inpatient and \$100 copay for outpatient surgery. The plans are based upon a tiered methodology, Tier 1 being an enhanced version with the lesser amounts of co-pays. Noted that specialist co-pays will increase from \$15 co-pay to \$25. This information was all presented to the PEC and the rep from the teacher's union who holds the most weighted vote, is just not interested. This does not affect the retirees, however, the young retirees may be affected as are those who are not eligible for medicare. Reviewed the data furnished by MIIA on the percentages of where the employees are going for medical services.

Paula in support of the budget but noted that she would like to see some money come out of the salary reserve account and moved into the building inspector budget to cover additional costs due to the number of building projects. Board concurred that there really isn't way out except for what is being proposed.

Discussed the article submitted by the Assessor's office for an additional \$15,000 for personal property and as we don't have enough information, at this time it's extremely difficult for the board to approve the article. Kerry noted that the contract for the regional assessor is up this year and that we're right on the cusp to hire a full time assessor. This is something that we may need to look at, as we're in a regional agreement with Ashby. This is definitely something that will be looked at and we know that as this has to be done, we should be looking to include 1/9 of what this would cost over the next 9 year term.

Board is extremely concerned at taking \$213K out of the stabilization fund and wants to understand realistically what this entails. To be sure that the rational on what each departments share should be makes sense.

3. PAYT Program – We will break even this year, but not sure about next year. Kerry is still working on information to present to the board.

Being no further business board voted unanimously to adjourn Regular Session at 12:40 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Williams, Chief Administrative Assistant
Board of Selectmen